



Southern Conference Football

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All-Southern Conference coaches football teams announced

SPARTANBURG, S.C. – The Southern Conference’s nine football coaches have selected their annual all-conference teams and specialty awards for the 2021 season. ETSU running back Quay Holmes is the Offensive Player of the Year, Chattanooga defensive end Devonsha Maxwell is the Defensive Player of the Year and Western Carolina safety Andreas Keaton is the Freshman of the Year. ETSU’s Randy Sanders is the Coach of the Year and Chattanooga offensive lineman Cole Strange earned his second straight Jacobs Blocking Award.

The coaches, who could not vote for their own players, selected all-conference first and second teams and all-freshman teams on offense, defense and special teams. Due to ties in the voting, there were two additional spots at second-team defensive back and one extra punter on the second team. Long snappers were added to the first and second teams for the first time this season.

Only true freshmen and traditional redshirt freshmen who played four or fewer games last season were eligible for all-freshman honors this season. This season’s offensive all-freshman squad includes just seven players and the special teams unit has one, while the defensive team contains the traditional 11 selections.

2021 Coaches All-Southern Conference Football Team

Offensive Player of the Year – Quay Holmes, R-Jr., RB, ETSU

Defensive Player of the Year – Devonsha Maxwell, Jr., DL, Chattanooga

Freshman of the Year – Andreas Keaton, DB, Western Carolina

Jacobs Blocking Award – Cole Strange, Sr., OL, Chattanooga

Coach of the Year – Randy Sanders, ETSU

First team offense

QB Liam Welch, Gr., Samford
RB Quay Holmes, R-Jr., ETSU
RB Ailym Ford, So., Chattanooga
OL Tre'mond Shorts, R-Jr., ETSU
OL Anderson Tomlin, R-Jr., Furman
OL Jason Poe, Gr., Mercer
OL McClendon Curtis, Jr., Chattanooga
OL Cole Strange, Sr., Chattanooga
TE Ryan Miller, Jr., Furman
WR Montrell Washington, Sr., Samford
WR Raphael Williams, R-Fr., Western Carolina

First team defense

DL Solomon Zubairu, So., Mercer
DL Ben Brewton, So., Chattanooga
DL Devonsha Maxwell, Jr., Chattanooga
DL Warren Dabney, Sr., VMI
LB Jared Folks, Gr., ETSU

LB Donovan Manuel, R-So., ETSU
LB Stone Snyder, Jr., VMI
DB Tyree Robinson, Sr., ETSU
DB Lance Wise, So., Mercer
DB Brandon Dowdell, Sr., Chattanooga
DB Jerrell Lawson, Sr., Chattanooga

First team special teams

PK Jerry Rice, R-So., VMI
P Matt Campbell, Jr., The Citadel
LS Robert Soderholm, Sr., VMI
RS Montrell Washington, Sr., Samford

Second team offense

QB Rogan Wells, Gr., Western Carolina
RB Jacob Saylor, Jr., ETSU
RB Irvin Mulligan, Jr., Wofford
OL Tavon Matthews, So., ETSU
OL Pearson Toomey, So., Furman
OL Gavin Orr, Sr., Samford
OL Nick Hartnett, R-Jr., VMI
OL Zak Kurz, Sr., Wofford
TE Nate Adkins, Jr., ETSU
WR Jakob Herres, Sr., VMI
WR Michael Jackson, Sr., VMI

Second team defense

DL Adrian Hope, Sr., Furman
DL Parker Stokes, Sr., Furman
DL Chris Hill, R-Fr., Mercer
DL Seth Simmer, Gr., Samford
LB Willie Eubanks III, Sr., The Citadel
LB Ty Boeck, Jr., Chattanooga
LB Jay Person, So., Chattanooga
DB Destin Mack, Jr., The Citadel
DB Mike Price, R-So., ETSU
DB Travis Blackshear, Jr., Furman
DB Rashun Freeman, Sr., Chattanooga
DB Ethan Caselberry, Sr., VMI
DB Aljareek Malry, Jr., VMI

Second team special teams

PK Tyler Keltner, So., ETSU
P Timmy Bleekrode, R-So., Furman
P Jack Culbreath, So., VMI
LS Steele Judy, R-Fr., The Citadel
RS Jacob Saylor, Jr., ETSU

All-Freshman Offense

Tyler Cherry, The Citadel
Joshua Harris, Furman
Jace Wilson, Furman
Dylan Davis, Furman
Jabari Brooks, Samford
KeShawn Toney, Chattanooga
Hunter Rice, VMI

All-Freshman Defense

Dominick Poole, The Citadel
Zion Alexander, ETSU
Dominic Morris, Furman

Bryce Stanfield, Furman
Savio Frazier, Mercer
Reuben Lowery III, Chattanooga
Kandler Martin, VMI
Andreas Keaton, Western Carolina
Amir Annoor, Wofford
Brandon Maina, Wofford
Chuck Smith, Wofford

All-Freshman Special Teams

Trey Turk, Mercer

Notes:

- Holmes (Walter Payton Award), Maxwell (Buck Buchanan Award), Keaton (Jerry Rice Award) and Sanders (Eddie Robinson Award) are all national finalists for FCS legacy awards, as are first-team All-SoCon selections Samford QB Liam Welch (Payton) and VMI linebacker Stone Snyder (Buchanan) and defensive all-freshman pick The Citadel defensive back Dominick Poole (Rice).
- ETSU's Holmes leads the FCS with 1,431 rushing yards and 130.1 per game and is third in rushing touchdowns with 16. His eight 100-yard games this season lead the SoCon. He has set program records for single-season and career (4,142) rushing yards this season and needs just seven more rushing yards to enter the SoCon's career top 10.
- Holmes is also fifth in the FCS in all-purpose yards per game with 148.64 and seventh in scoring a 9.3 points per game.
- Holmes is ETSU's first coaches' offensive player of the year selection since wide receiver B.J. Adigun in 1997 and just the third overall, joining running back George Searcy, who claimed the inaugural award in 1989.
- Chattanooga's Maxwell leads the SoCon with 12.0 sacks, double what anyone else in the league has and good for fifth in the FCS. His 1.09 sacks per game rank eighth in the FCS. Maxwell leads the SoCon and ranks 15th in the FCS with 15.5 tackles for loss on the season, while his 1.4 per game rank 17th nationally. Maxwell totaled 42 tackles (28 solo) this season.
- Maxwell was a two-time SoCon Defensive Player of the Week presented by GEICO this season, first earning the honor after matching the school record with 3.5 sacks for 24 yards in a win at North Alabama and winning again after a school-record 5.0 sacks for 27 yards in a win over then-No. 10 ETSU.
- Maxwell's selection marks the ninth time a Chattanooga player has been named the defensive player of the year by the coaches and is the first since defensive lineman Isaiah Mack was honored in 2018. He is the Mocs' sixth selection since 2012.
- Western Carolina's Keaton started all 11 games at safety for the Catamounts this season, finishing sixth on the team with 44 tackles. He had three interceptions on the season, including two against Samford on Sept. 18. He broke up six passes on the season. He tied for seventh in the league with nine total passes defended and ranked eighth with 0.82 per game.
- Keaton is the fourth Catamount chosen as the freshman of the year by the coaches and the first since quarterback Tyrie Adams in 2016.
- Strange, who also shared the Jacobs Blocking Award last season, becomes Chattanooga's second player to win it in consecutive years, joining Corey Levin (2014-15). Strange's selection is the Mocs' fifth overall, as Mike Nease won UTC's first in 1983.
- Strange helped Chattanooga lead the league with just nine sacks against all season, an average of just 0.82 per game, a mark that ranks fourth in the FCS this season. He also helped clear the way for 1,000-yard rusher and first-team All-SoCon running back Ailym Ford, who ranked second in the league in yards per game.

- ETSU's Sanders is the coach of the year for the second time after earning his first award in 2018, when he led the Bucs to their only other SoCon title. This season, Sanders has led ETSU to a 10-1 overall mark and a 7-1 league record to earn the program's first-ever outright SoCon title. He has the Bucs ranked within the top 10 in both major national polls and earned the No. 7 seed and a first-round bye in the upcoming FCS playoffs.

- Sanders is the first ETSU coach to earn the award multiple times. Mike Cavan has the Bucs' only other selection, in 1996.

- ETSU, Chattanooga and VMI led the way with 12 combined all-conference and all-freshman selections apiece. The league-champion Bucs paced the SoCon with 11 total all-conference picks, putting five on the first team and six on the second team, sharing league-high honors with VMI. Chattanooga led the way with seven first-team selections.

- Furman paced the SoCon with five all-freshman selections.

- Samford's Montrell Washington earned first-team honors at both wide receiver and return specialist. He leads the FCS with 1,938 all-purpose yards and an average of 176.18 per game. He also leads the FCS with 985 combined kick return yards and shares the FCS lead with two punt returns for touchdowns and is second with 18 total touchdowns.

- ETSU's Jacob Saylor earned second-team honors at both running back and return specialist. Saylor leads the FCS with 7.50 yards per carry and is second with 1,707 all-purpose yards and third in all-purpose yards per game with 155.18. He ranks fourth nationally with an average of 29.8 yards per kickoff return.

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